(c) the fresh initiative taken to enhance trade volumes between the BITMS-EC countries after their recently concluded fourth Ministerial meeting at Rangoon (Myanmar)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) No specific proposal has been received by the Ministry.

(c) Upgradation of port facilities and infrastructure at Calcutta port is a continuous process, which would also help enhancing trade volumes between BITMS-EC countries.

Patronage of SCI in crude import

417. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Shipping Corporation of India desires to have the patronage of public sector oil companies for carrying their crude imports;

(b) if so, the response of Government to this;

(c) whether the oil companies will not be denied advantage of competitive bidding if Government agree to it; and

(d) if so, the extent of loss of oil companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (d) The request of Shipping Corporation of India has been taken up with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for a decision. The decision of that Ministry is awaited.

Rehabilitation of handicapped in Gujarat earthquake

418. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of people were rendered handicapped as a result of Gujarat earthquake as reported in the news-item appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated the 26th January, 2002; and

(b) if so, the efforts made by Govenment to rehabilitate those handicapped by providing additional financial / material assistance?